

6.0 PLANS AND POLICIES ANALYSIS

This section provides a preliminary evaluation of the Valle Verde project's compliance with requirements of the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The Santa Barbara Planning Commission will make the final determination regarding the project's consistency with applicable plans and policies.

6.1 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATION

The Land Use Element of the Santa Barbara General Plan has applied "Residential, 5 units/acre" and "Residential 1 unit/acre" land use designations to the project site. The Land Use Element also describes the Hidden Valley neighborhood as being "almost entirely developed" and indicates that the southern and eastern portions of the neighborhood (including the Valle Verde facility) are zoned and developed with single-family residences, while the northwestern portion of the Hidden Valley neighborhood is zoned for and developed with two-family residences. The General Plan reflects this existing land use with density classifications of five dwelling units to the acre and 12 dwelling units per acre over the single-family and two-family areas. The Land Use Element also recognizes that there are two "retirement homes" in the neighborhood, including the Vista Del Monte and Valle Verde. The Land Use Element indicates that the Hidden Valley neighborhood encompasses an area of 258.8 acres and includes 723 dwelling units.

If the proposed project were to be implemented, The Valle Verde facility would provide a total of 257 dwelling units. This would result in a gross dwelling unit density of 4.3 units per acre on the 59.75-acre project site (257 units divided by 59.75); and a net dwelling unit density of 5.1 units per acre if the proposed 9.8-acre oak woodland dedication area is deducted from the project site size (257 units divided by 49.95). Therefore, the overall dwelling unit density proposed for the project site is consistent with existing Land Use Element requirements and the development characteristics of other developed areas in the Hidden Valley neighborhood.

The proposed Draft Land Use Element also indicates that the Hidden Valley neighborhood is almost entirely developed, and that the southern and eastern portions of the neighborhood are developed with single family uses, while the northwestern area is developed with duplex and multi-family units. The Draft Land Use Element also indicates that there are two large licensed residential care facilities, Vista Del Monte and Valle Verde, in the neighborhood, along with the Hillside House facility. The Draft Land Use Element indicates that the Hidden Valley neighborhood is 337 acres in area and includes 871 dwelling units. The increase in neighborhood size and dwelling unit count has resulted primarily from annexations of adjacent unincorporated properties.

6.2 GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

6.2.1 Conservation Element

The City's Conservation Element policies require that significant environmental resources of the City be preserved and protected. The Conservation Element requires implementation of resource protection measures for archaeological, cultural and historic resources; protection and enhancement of visual, biological and open space resources; protection of specimen and street trees; maintenance of air and water quality; and that drainage, erosion and flooding hazards be minimized. The Conservation Element recognizes that while full implementation of the policies would be the most desirable, there are often competing demands for preservation, enhancement, development and conservation. Conservation Element policies applicable to the Valle Verde project are evaluated below.

***Visual Resources Policy 2.** Development on hillsides shall not significantly modify the natural topography and vegetation.*

The proposed project would require approximately 24,820 total cubic yards of grading, including 11,520 cubic yards of cut and 13,300 cubic yards of fill. The majority of this grading would occur on three portions of the project site.

On the Rutherford parcel, 10,780 total cubic yards of grading would occur, including 6,800 cubic yards of cut and 3,900 cubic yards of fill. As described in Section 5.1.4 of this EIR, grading and proposed retaining walls on the Rutherford property would not result in a significant visual impact because graded areas and a proposed retaining wall would be substantially screened from views provided along Torino Drive.

In the area of the proposed Maintenance Building in the west project area, approximately 7,550 total cubic yards of grading would occur, consisting of 1,900 cubic yards of cut and 5,650 cubic yards of fill. The analysis of impacts to visual resources provided in Section 5.1.4 concluded that due to the presence of intervening buildings and vegetation, the proposed Maintenance Building and associated grading would not be visible from Calle de los Amigos or Torino Drive.

In the area of proposed unit structures 31-34 in the west project area, approximately 4,270 total cubic yards of grading would occur, including 2,300 cubic yards of cut and 1,970 cubic yards of fill. The analysis of project-related aesthetic impacts determined that the proposed duplex units on the west project area would not be visible from Calle de los Amigos or Torino Drive.

Grading on other portions of the project site would occur in generally level areas for foundation preparation. All proposed areas of the project site that would be graded would be either covered with structures or landscaped. As a result the project would not result in the

creation of “grading scars” that would have the potential to result in a significant visual impact. Therefore, the proposed project would be **potentially consistent** with the requirements of Visual Resources Policy 2.

***Visual Resources Policy 2.1.** Development which necessitates grading on hillsides with slopes greater than 30% should not be permitted.*

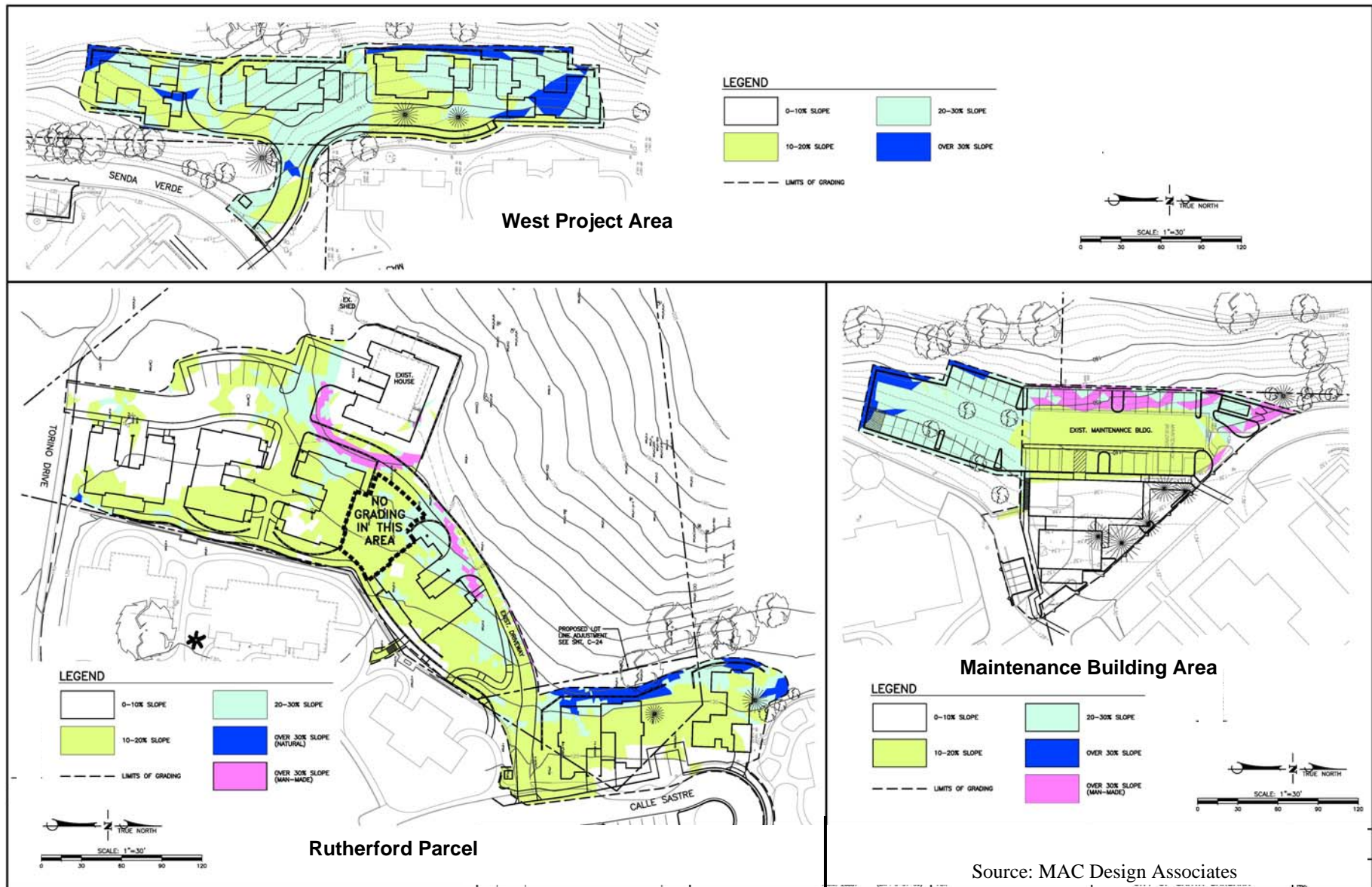
As described above in the evaluation of Policy 2.0, most of the project-related grading would occur on the Rutherford parcel; in the vicinity of the proposed Maintenance Building to develop a new parking lot; and adjacent to four proposed duplex buildings on the west project area. As depicted on Figure 6.2-1, the topography of those areas varies between a gradient of 0-30 percent, however, several relatively small and isolated areas have slopes that exceed a gradient of 30 percent. Roughly half of the slopes that are steeper than 30 percent are man-made slopes and half are natural slopes.

Graded areas on the project site that have existing slopes greater than 30 percent would not be visible from Calle de los Amigos, and would have limited or no visibility from Torino Drive and the adjacent pedestrian/equestrian trail. In addition, all graded areas on the project site, including areas with an existing slope of 30 percent or more, would be either covered with structures or landscaped. As a result the project would not result in the creation of “grading scars” that would have the potential to result in a significant visual impact. Therefore, the proposed project, and the proposal to conduct grading activities on relatively small and isolated areas with slopes in excess of 30 percent, would be **potentially consistent** with the requirements of Visual Resources Policy 2.1.

***Visual Resource Policy 3.0.** New development shall not obstruct scenic view corridors, including those of the ocean and lower elevations of the City viewed respectively from the shoreline and upper foothills, and of the upper foothills and mountains viewed respectively from the beach and lower elevations of the City.*

An analysis of project-related impacts to important public scenic views is provided in Section 5.1-4 of this EIR. That analysis concluded that existing views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and lower foothill areas as seen from viewpoints along Torino Drive would not be substantially affected (photosimulation 5.1-5b) by the proposed project, or that the proposed project would have no effect on existing mountain views (photosimulation 5.1-6b). The analysis of potential view impacts also concluded that the proposed project would not result in substantial impacts of to mountain views as seen from the pedestrian/hiking trail located adjacent to Torino Road. The Valle Verde project would not have the potential to affect existing views of the ocean. Therefore, the proposed project would be **potentially consistent** with the requirements of Visual Resources Policy 3.0.

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***Visual Resources Policy 4.0.** Trees enhance the general appearance of the City's landscape and should be preserved and protected.*

***Visual Resources Policy 4.1.** Mature trees should be integrated into project design rather than removed.*

***Visual Resources Policy 4.2.** All feasible options should be exhausted prior to the removal of trees.*

A tree survey (Spiewak, 2008) of the proposed project development area identified 183 trees. Of these trees, most are non-natives landscape trees, such as Chinese pistache, various species of pines, Chinese elm, silk trees, fruit trees, Brazilian pepper and others. Also located on the proposed project development area are 79 oak trees and two sycamore trees. The western portion of the Valle Verde property also includes an oak woodland area that contains over 500 oak trees. The project applicant has proposed to dedicate or otherwise restrict development rights on this 9.8-acres area.

Implementation of the Valle Verde project would result in the removal of 61 trees, many of which are small- to medium-sized landscape trees. Of the trees to be removed, however, 15 would be oak trees and six other large specimen trees would also be removed. The Initial Study prepared for the Valle Verde project indicates that the original project design would have removed or would have had the potential to impact approximately 30 oak trees. However, changes that have been incorporated into the proposed project design have avoided 15 of the 30 oak trees were originally identified for removal.

The Valle Verde project has proposed to plant 10 oak tree saplings for each tree that is removed, and proposed mitigation measure BIO-2a provides specific tree planting, maintenance, monitoring and success criteria for the tree-planting program. Proposed mitigation measure AES-1a also requires that all removed skyline or specimen trees be replaced on a 1:1 basis, and proposed mitigation measure BIO-1a requires that new oak woodland habitat be created on the Valle Verde property at a replacement ratio of 2:1. In addition to the proposed mitigation measures, the preliminary landscape plans for the Valle Verde project indicates that a substantial number of new landscape trees would be planted on the project site. With the implementation of proposed project plans and mitigation measures, the Valle Verde project would not result in an overall reduction in the number of trees located on the project site.

With the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the proposed Valle Verde project would be **potentially consistent** with the tree protection and preservation requirements of the Conservation Element because the project design reflects efforts to preserve significant on-site trees; a tree protection plan would be implemented to minimize impacts to trees that are to be preserved; and a substantial number of significant mature trees

would be preserved in the proposed oak woodland dedication area and in proposed development areas.

Biological Resources Policy 4.0. Remaining Coastal Perennial Grasslands and Southern Oak Woodlands shall be preserved, where feasible.

An oak woodland that contains over 500 trees is located on the western portion of the Valle Verde campus site. Implementation of the proposed project would impact approximately 0.24 of an acre of the oak woodland due to the development of proposed residences and required long-term fuel management activities.

Proposed mitigation measure BIO-1a requires that new oak woodland habitat be created on the Valle Verde property at a replacement ratio of 2:1; and the project applicant has proposed to dedicate or otherwise restrict development rights on the 9.8-acre on-site oak woodland area. With the implementation of these measures, the proposed project would be **potentially consistent** with Biological Resources Policy 4.0 because the project would not result in a reduction in existing oak woodland area and a substantial oak woodland area in the City would be protected from the possible effects of future development.

The grassland area located on the western portion of the project site is non-native annual grassland. This policy encourages the preservation of perennial grassland, and therefore, is not applicable to the on-site grassland.

Biological Resources Policy 5. The habitats of rare and endangered species shall be preserved.

Short-term construction-related impacts to silvery legless lizards and coast horned lizards, both of which are considered to be sensitive species, would be significant but mitigable. This impact would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of proposed mitigation measure BIO-3a, which requires monitoring during initial ground disturbing activities, and if necessary, relocation of lizards observed in construction areas. Long-term impacts to silvery legless lizards and coast horned lizards would be less than significant due to the relatively small amount (approximately two acres) of suitable non-native annual grassland, coastal sage scrub or coast live oak woodland habitat that would be impacted by the project. Furthermore, proposed mitigation measure BIO-1a requires that removed oak woodland and coastal sage scrub habitat be replaced at a ratio of 2:1. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, habitat for silvery legless lizards and coast horned lizards would be preserved and the Valle Verde project would be **potentially consistent** with this policy.

6.2.2 Circulation Element

The Circulation Element of the General Plan contains goals and implementing measures to reduce adverse impacts to the City's street system and parking by reducing reliance on the

automobile, encouraging alternative forms of transportation, increasing parking availability, reviewing traffic impact standards, and applying land use and planning strategies that support the City's mobility goals.

The proposed project would result in a very small increase in the amount of traffic currently generated by the Valle Verde facility, as the proposed project would generate approximately 93 average daily trips, eight (8) a.m. peak hour trips and 12 p.m. peak hour trips. The proposed project would also provide a net increase of 83 parking spaces on the project site, which would be available for use by campus residents and employees. The analysis of parking-related impacts provided in EIR Section 5.2 concluded the proposed off-street parking would address the parking demand of the proposed project, and would also reduce the number of employee vehicles that presently park on-street. As proposed, the Valle Verde project would be **potentially consistent** with this policy.

6.2.3 Noise Element

The City's Noise Element includes policies intended to achieve and maintain a noise environment that is compatible with the variety of human activities and land uses in the City. The additional residences and accessory uses that would be developed on the Valle Verde campus would not be a substantial source of noise that would have the potential to result in noise-related conflicts with surrounding land uses. Due to the very low amount of traffic that would be generated by the Valle Verde project, a noticeable increase in vehicle noise would not occur on roadways located in the project area. Short-term construction noise could result in significant impacts to nearby sensitive receptors, but this potentially significant impact would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures identified by the Initial Study prepared for the project. These measures include requirements to provide advance notice of construction activities to nearby residents (N-1); limitations on construction hours and days for noise-generating activities (N-2); construction equipment noise control (N-3); and the use of noise barriers when determined necessary (N-4). Therefore, the proposed project would be **potentially consistent** with the applicable policies and guidelines of the Noise Element.

6.2.4 Seismic Safety/Safety Element

The City's Seismic Safety/Safety Element requires that development be sited, designed and maintained to protect life, property, and public well-being from seismic and other geologic hazards, and to reduce or avoid adverse economic, social, and environmental impacts caused by hazardous geologic conditions. The Seismic Safety/Safety Element addresses a number of potential hazards including geology, seismicity, flooding, liquefaction, tsunamis, high groundwater, and erosion.

The Initial Study prepared for the Valle Verde project determined that the project site is subject to a number of geologic hazard and safety-related constraints, but could be found to be potentially consistent with applicable policies of the Seismic Safety/Safety Element if a proposed mitigation measure is implemented. This measure requires that the project adhere to

the California Building Code and implement recommendations for grading and development outlined in the geotechnical reports prepared for the project. Therefore, the proposed project would be **potentially consistent** with the applicable policies and guidelines of the Seismic Safety/Safety Element.

6.3 ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Two single-family residential zoning classifications have been applied to the Valle Verde facility. The “A-1” zone allows one single-family residence on one-acre parcels, and the “E-3” zone allows one single-family residence on 7,500 square foot parcels. Based on the project site’s zoning, topography and the requirements of the City’s Slope Density Ordinance, a maximum of 189 units could be allowed on the 59.75-acre property. The Land Use Element, however, acknowledges that densities for senior housing can be greater because the number of people per unit is lower for such housing than for non-restricted housing. Previous CUP amendments for the Valle Verde facility have allowed up to 254 units on the property, and implementation of the proposed project would result in 257 residential units on the project site. The proposed project includes a request for the approval of a new CUP to allow the proposed residential units.

The Zoning Ordinance provides development standards related to street and yard setbacks, porch and building eave setbacks, and the separation distance provided between buildings. The proposed project includes a request for Modifications of Zoning Ordinance standards. Street and yard setback reductions have been requested for six of the proposed residence buildings, the proposed Maintenance Building and a gazebo structure. Porch or building eave setback reductions have been requested for five proposed residences, and a building separation distance reduction has been requested for 21 residential buildings and one accessory building.